

## GOT THE HOLIDAY BLUES??

### DON'T INVITE STRESS OR DEPRESSION TO YOUR TABLE THIS YEAR!!

The Holiday season can be demanding even under the best circumstances. Obviously, this holiday season may be different than the ones before. There may be good friends or family members missing, maybe you are celebrating the festivities in a different location, and eating different food. Beyond the physical, there may be emotional differences which come about in different ways. Although daily life may be harder this year, holidays tend to make these differences more apparent. During this kind of trauma, the recovery process can take anywhere from months to years. The length of time varies from person to person and is completely NORMAL.

Holiday Blues Defined. What you may be experiencing:

- **Depression-** You may feel lonely even though you are with loved ones. There can also be sadness, and self loathing which you may not be ready for.
- **Stress-** It can take many forms. An example can be overburdening yourself and thinking you will never be able to make everything the way it should be.
- **Fatigue-** Your body may feel tired and strained. This can come in the form of head, back, and neck aches.
- **Financial Constraints-** Your financial situation could be different than before. This could come in the form of not being able to buy certain gifts that you would like.
- **“Survivor’s Guilt”-** You could think that while other people have suffered so much, you and your family are relatively unscathed.

The reality is that for many individuals and families of Louisiana, there have been significant changes. We may not be able to make things “the same as before”, but below are some suggestions that might help.

- **Recognize-** Things may not be the same as years past. Do not try to make them the same. Realize that bad feelings during this time are completely NATURAL.
- **Modify-** Don’t try to make it the same if it isn’t. Since things may not be the same, perhaps new traditions and rituals can be created. Make the best of what you have and who you have.
- **Keep the Faith-** For many, religion and spirituality can be called upon to give strength and comfort during particularly trying times.
- **Talk-** Don’t make your losses the elephant in the room that no one mentions. If it is bearing heavy on you, it’s probably bearing down on others too. Discussing what is going on can alleviate the pressure and weight of the situation. It is also important to be honest to children without being overly descriptive.
- **Take Your Time-** Don’t be hesitant to take time out for yourself. Time goes very quickly around the holidays. Be sure to get adequate rest and exercise. Also, take time to socialize with others.
- **Avoid Extremes-** What with everything, you may overeat or drink too much. It may be healthier for you and your loved ones if you take things in moderation.
- **Get Help-** Sometimes it helps to talk to someone who is objective and confidential. Eight free sessions are available for OPH employees. If you’d like to make an appointment, please call toll-free 1 (866) 897-1585.

It’s true, this Holiday season may be unlike any other...but it can still be a good one.

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